

What is Claimed is:

1 1. A method for a controller to facilitate a transaction, comprising:
2 receiving seller offer information associated with an item being offered for sale by
3 a seller;
4 receiving buyer offer information associated with a buyer offering to make a
5 purchase;
6 determining an evaluation rule;
7 matching the seller offer information and the buyer offer information based on the
8 evaluation rule; and
9 arranging for the seller to sell the item to the buyer.

1 2. The method of claim 1, wherein said matching comprises:
2 determining a buyer offer code based on the buyer offer information;
3 determining a seller offer code based on the seller offer information; and
4 matching the buyer offer code with the seller offer code based on the evaluation
5 rule.

1 3. The method of claim 2, wherein the buyer offer code is associated with a set of
2 possible items, and said matching comprises determining that the seller offer code is
3 associated with a subset of the set of possible items.

1 4. The method of claim 1, wherein said matching comprises:
2 determining an item quality class associated with the item based on the seller offer
3 information, and
4 matching the buyer offer information with the item quality class.

1 5. The method of claim 4, wherein said determining the item quality class is based
2 on at least one of: (i) an item category, (ii) at least one item feature, (iii) an item price, (iv)
3 an age associated with the item, (v) an item manufacturer, (vi) an item description, (vii) an
4 item image, (viii) an item condition, and (ix) an accessory associated with the item.

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1 6. The method of claim 4, further comprising:
2 outputting, based on the item quality class, a suggested item price to at least one of:
3 (i) the buyer, and (ii) the seller.

1 7. The method of claim 4, further comprising:
2 outputting, based on the item quality class, a suggested item price range to at least
3 one of: (i) the buyer, and (ii) the seller.

1 8. The method of claim 1, wherein the seller offer information includes a seller
2 price, the buyer offer information includes a buyer price, and said matching comprises
3 matching the seller offer information and the buyer offer information based on the seller
4 price and the buyer price.

1 9. The method of claim 8, wherein the seller price is less than or equal to the buyer
2 price.

1 10. The method of claim 8, wherein the seller price is greater than the buyer price.

1 11. The method of claim 1, wherein the seller offer information includes a seller
2 price, the buyer offer information includes a buyer price, and said matching comprises
3 matching the seller offer information and the buyer offer information based on information
4 not including the seller price and the buyer price.

1 12. The method of claim 1, wherein said receiving seller offer information
2 comprises receiving the seller offer information from the seller via at least one of: (i) a
3 Web site, (ii) the Internet, (iii) a seller computer, (iv) a personal digital assistant, (v) a
4 kiosk, (vi) an electronic mail message, (vii) a telephone, (viii) an interactive voice
5 response unit, and (ix) an operator.

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1 13. The method of claim 1, wherein the seller offer information comprises at least
2 one of: (i) an item category, (ii) an item quality class, (iii) at least one item feature, (iv) a
3 seller price, (v) an age associated with the item, (vi) an item manufacturer, (vii) an item
4 description, (viii) an item image, (ix) an item condition, (x) an accessory associated with
5 the item, (xi) a seller offer period, (xii) seller delivery information, (xiii) seller payment
6 information, (xiv) a seller evaluation rule, and (xv) a seller preference.

1 14. The method of claim 1, wherein said receiving buyer offer information
2 comprises receiving the buyer offer information from the buyer via at least one of: (i) a
3 Web site, (ii) the Internet, (iii) a buyer computer, (iv) a personal digital assistant, (v) a
4 kiosk, (vi) an electronic mail message, (vii) a telephone, (viii) an interactive voice
5 response unit, and (ix) an operator.

1 15. The method of claim 1, wherein the buyer offer information comprises at least
2 one of: (i) an item category, (ii) an item quality class, (iii) at least one item feature, (iv) a
3 buyer price, (v) an age associated with the item, (vi) an item manufacturer, (vii) an item
4 description, (viii) an item image, (ix) an item condition, (x) a buyer offer period, (xi) buyer
5 delivery information, (xii) buyer payment information, (xiii) a buyer evaluation rule, and
6 (xiv) a buyer preference.

1 16. The method of claim 1, wherein the seller offer information comprises a seller
2 address, the buyer offer information comprises a buyer address and said matching is
3 performed based on the seller address and the buyer address.

1 17. The method of claim 16, wherein the evaluation rule comprises the seller
2 address being within a predetermined distance of the buyer address.

1 18. The method of claim 16, wherein the evaluation rule comprises the seller
2 address and the buyer address being within a predetermined distance of a third party
3 address.

1 19. The method of claim 1, wherein the seller offer information comprises at least
2 one transaction requirement and said matching is only performed if the buyer offer
3 information complies with the at least one transaction requirement.

1 20. The method of claim 1, wherein the seller offer information comprises at least
2 one transaction preference and said matching is based on the transaction preference.

1 21. The method of claim 1, wherein the buyer offer information comprises at least
2 one transaction requirement and said matching is only performed if the seller offer
3 information complies with the at least one transaction requirement.

1 22. The method of claim 1, wherein the buyer offer information comprises at least
2 one transaction preference and said matching is based on the transaction preference.

1 23. The method of claim 1, wherein said determining the evaluation rule is
2 performed automatically based on revenue management information associated with the
3 controller.

1 24. The method of claim 23, wherein the revenue management information
2 comprises at least one of: (i) an amount of profit associated with the controller, and (ii) a
3 number of transactions associated with the controller.

1 25. The method of claim 1, wherein said determining the evaluation rule is
2 performed manually by a controller operator.

1 26. The method of claim 1, wherein said determining the evaluation rule
2 comprises retrieving a predetermined evaluation rule.

1 27. The method of claim 1, wherein said determining the evaluation rule
2 comprises selecting an evaluation rule from a plurality of possible evaluation rules.

1 28. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2 measuring a current performance of the controller,
3 wherein said determining the evaluation rule is based on the current performance of
4 the controller.

1 29. The method of claim 1, wherein said determining the evaluation rule is based
2 on a matching objective.

1 30. The method of claim 29, wherein the matching objective comprises at least
2 one of: (i) increasing a profit associated with the transaction, and (ii) increasing a total
3 number of transactions.

1 31. The method of claim 1, wherein the evaluation rule comprises at least one of:
2 (i) not matching the buyer with at least one predetermined seller, and (ii) not matching the
3 seller with at least one predetermined buyer.

1 32. The method of claim 1, wherein the evaluation rule is based on at least one of:
2 (i) when the buyer offer information is received, and (ii) when the seller offer information
3 is received.

1 33. The method of claim 1, wherein the evaluation rule is based on information
2 associated with the controller.

1 34. The method of claim 33, wherein the information associated with the
2 controller comprises at least one of: (i) an amount of profit associated with the transaction
3 for the controller, (ii) a current overall level of profit associated with the controller, (iii)
4 information associated with another controller, (iv) a total number of buyer offers pending
5 in the controller for similar items, and (v) a total number of seller offers pending in the
6 controller for similar items.

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1 35. The method of claim 1, wherein the evaluation rule is based on information
2 associated with the seller.

1 36. The method of claim 35, wherein the information associated with the seller
2 comprises at least one of: (i) a seller location, (ii) a seller transaction history, (iii) a seller
3 reputation, (iv) a seller payment identifier, (v) demographic information associated with
4 the seller, (vi) psychographic information associated with the seller, (vii) a credit rating
5 associated with the seller, (viii) other offers to sell associated with the seller, (ix) other
6 offers to buy associated with the seller, and (x) an amount of profit associated with the
7 transaction for the seller.

1 37. The method of claim 1, wherein the evaluation rule is based on information
2 associated with the buyer.

1 38. The method of claim 37, wherein the information associated with the buyer
2 comprises at least one of: (i) a buyer location, (ii) a buyer transaction history, (iii) a buyer
3 reputation, (iv) a buyer payment identifier, (v) demographic information associated with
4 the buyer, (vi) a credit rating associated with the buyer, (vii) psychographic information
5 associated with the buyer, (viii) other offers to sell associated with the buyer, (ix) other
6 offers to buy associated with the buyer, and (x) an amount of profit associated with the
7 transaction for the buyer.

1 39. The method of claim 1, wherein the evaluation rule is based on information
2 associated with the item.

1 40. The method of claim 39, wherein the information associated with the item
2 comprises at least one of: (i) a past popularity of the item, (ii) a current popularity of the
3 item, and (iii) a predicted future popularity of the item.

1 41. The method of claim 1, wherein said matching comprises:
2 matching the seller offer information with a plurality of buyer offers;

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3 and selecting one of the plurality of buyer offers.

1 42. The method of claim 41, wherein said selecting is based on priority rankings
2 associated with the buyer offers.

1 43. The method of claim 42, wherein the priority rankings are based on at least
2 one of: (i) priority payments, (ii) other seller offers for similar items, (iii) other buyer
3 offers for similar items, (iv) transaction histories, (v) the seller offer information, and (vi)
4 the buyer offer information.

1 44. The method of claim 1, wherein said matching comprises:
2 matching the buyer offer information with a plurality of seller offers;
3 and selecting one of the plurality of seller offers.

1 45. The method of claim 44, wherein said selecting is based on priority rankings
2 associated with the seller offers.

1 46. The method of claim 45, wherein the priority rankings are based on at least
2 one of: (i) priority payments, (ii) other seller offers for similar items, (iii) other buyer
3 offers for similar items, and (iv) transaction histories.

1 47. The method of claim 1, wherein said matching is performed based on when the
2 seller offer information is received.

1 48. The method of claim 1, wherein said matching is performed based on when the
2 buyer offer information is received.

1 49. The method of claim 1, wherein said matching is performed periodically.

1 50. The method of claim 1, wherein the seller is obligated to sell the item
2 subsequent to said matching.

1 51. The method of claim 50, further comprising:
2 arranging for the seller to provide payment of a penalty amount if the seller does
3 not sell the item.

1 52. The method of claim 1, wherein the buyer is obligated to buy the item
2 subsequent to said matching.

1 53. The method of claim 51, further comprising:
2 arranging for the buyer to provide payment of a penalty amount if the buyer does
3 not buy the item.

1 54. The method of claim 1, wherein the seller and the buyer are obligated to
2 complete a transaction subsequent to said matching.

1 55. The method of claim 1, further comprising
2 determining an appropriate item price based on the seller offer information;
3 transmitting information associated with the appropriate item price to the seller;
4 and
5 determining a seller price.

1 56. The method of claim 1, further comprising
2 determining an appropriate item price based on the buyer offer information;
3 transmitting information associated with the appropriate item price to the buyer;
4 and
5 determining a buyer price.

1 57. The method of claim 1, further comprising
2 determining a subsidy, the subsidy being associated with a benefit from a subsidy
3 provider to be applied to the transaction,

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1 60. A method for a controller to facilitate a transaction, comprising:
2 receiving seller offer information associated with an item being offered for sale by
3 a seller;
4 determining an appropriate item price based on the seller offer information;
5 transmitting information associated with the appropriate item price to the seller;
6 and
7 determining an actual seller price.

1 61. The method of claim 60, further comprising:
2 arranging for the seller to provide the item to a buyer in exchange for payment of
3 an amount based on the actual seller price.

1 62. The method of claim 60, wherein at least one of said receiving and
2 transmitting are performed via at least one of: (i) a Web site, (ii) the Internet, (iii) a seller
3 computer, (iv) a personal digital assistant, (v) a kiosk, (vi) an electronic mail message,
4 (vii) a telephone, (viii) an interactive voice response unit, and (ix) an operator.

1 63. The method of claim 60, wherein the seller offer information comprises at
2 least one of: (i) an item category, (ii) an item quality class, (iii) at least one item feature,
3 (iv) a seller price, (v) an age associated with the item, (vi) an item manufacturer, (vii) an
4 item description, (viii) an item image, (ix) an item condition, (x) an accessory associated
5 with the item, (xi) a seller offer period, (xii) seller delivery information, (xiii) seller
6 payment information, (xiv) at least one seller evaluation rule, (xv) a transaction
7 requirement, and (xvi) a transaction preference,

1 64. The method of claim 60, wherein the appropriate item price is further based on
2 at least one of: (i) information associated with at least one prior transaction for a similar
3 item, (ii) another seller offer pending for a similar item, (iii) a buyer offer pending for a
4 similar item, (iv) a seller transaction history, (v) demographic information associated with

5 the seller, (vi) psychographic information associated with the seller, (vii) a credit rating
6 associated with the seller, (viii) another seller offer associated with the seller, and (ix) a
7 buyer offer associated with the seller.

1 65. The method of claim 60, wherein the appropriate item price is further based on
2 a matching objective.

1 66. The method of claim 65, wherein the matching objective comprises at least
2 one of: (i) increasing a profit associated with the transaction, and (ii) increasing a total
3 number of transactions.

1 67. The method of claim 60, wherein said determining the appropriate item price
2 comprises:
3 determining an item quality class based on the seller offer information; and
4 determining the appropriate item price based on the item quality class.

1 68. The method of claim 60, wherein said determining the actual seller price
2 comprises:
3 automatically determining the actual seller price based on the appropriate item
4 price.

1 69. The method of claim 60, wherein said determining the actual seller price
2 comprises:
3 receiving an adjustment of the appropriate item price from the seller; and
4 determining the actual seller price based on the appropriate item price and the
5 adjustment.

1 70. The method of claim 69, wherein the adjustment comprises at least one of: (i)
2 a predetermined percentage, and (ii) a predetermined amount.

1 71. The method of claim 60, wherein said determining an actual seller price
2 comprises:
3 receiving information associated with the actual seller price from the seller.

1 72. A method for a controller to facilitate a transaction, comprising:
2 receiving buyer offer information associated with a buyer offering to make a
3 purchase;
4 determining an appropriate item price based on the buyer offer information;
5 transmitting information associated with the appropriate item price to the buyer;
6 and
7 determining an actual buyer price.

1 73. A method for a controller to facilitate a transaction, comprising:
2 receiving seller offer information associated with an item being offered for sale by
3 a seller;
4 receiving buyer offer information associated with a buyer offering to make a
5 purchase;
6 determining a subsidy, the subsidy being associated with a benefit from a subsidy
7 provider to be applied to the transaction; and
8 arranging for the seller to provide the item to the buyer in accordance with the
9 benefit.

1 74. The method of claim 73, wherein the subsidy provider is the controller.

1 75. The method of claim 73, wherein the subsidy provider is a third party.

1 76. The method of claim 73, wherein the subsidy is conditioned upon performance
2 of a task by the seller, and further comprising:
3 transmitting an indication of a subsidy offer to the seller; and
4 receiving an indication of acceptance of the subsidy offer from the seller.

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1 77. The method of claim 73, wherein the subsidy is conditioned upon performance
2 of a task by the buyer, and further comprising:
3 transmitting an indication of a subsidy offer to the buyer; and
4 receiving an indication of acceptance of the subsidy offer from the buyer.

1 78. The method of claim 73, wherein the subsidy is conditioned upon at least one
2 of: (i) submitting another offer to the controller, (ii) completing another transaction
3 through the controller, (iii) subscribing to a service, (iv) applying for a service, (v) a
4 performance of a task, and (vi) a performance of a plurality of tasks.

1 79. The method of claim 73, wherein the subsidy is associated with a payment to
2 be provided to at least one of: (i) the buyer, and (ii) the seller.

1 80. The method of claim 73, wherein said determining is based on at least one of:
2 (i) information associated with the seller, (ii) information associated with the item, (iii)
3 information associated with the buyer, (iv) information associated with the controller, and
4 (v) information associated with a third party.

1 81. The method of claim 73, wherein said determining is based on at least one of:
2 (i) an item category, (ii) an item quality class, (iii) at least one item feature, (iv) an item
3 price, (v) an age associated with the item, (vi) an item manufacturer, (vii) an item
4 description, (viii) an item image, (ix) an item condition, (x) an accessory associated with
5 the item, (xi) an offer period, (xii) delivery information, (xiii) payment information, (xiv)
6 at least one evaluation rule, (xv) a location, (xvi) a transaction history, (xvii) demographic
7 information, (xviii) psychographic information, (xix) a credit rating, (xx) other offers to
8 sell, (xxi) other offers to buyer, and (xii) an amount of profit associated with the
9 transaction.

1 82. The method of claim 73, wherein one of said receiving seller offer information
2 and receiving buyer offer information is performed via at least one of: (i) a Web site, (ii)
3 the Internet, (iii) a computer, (iv) a personal digital assistant, (v) a kiosk, (vi) an electronic

- 4 mail message, (vii) a telephone, (viii) an interactive voice response unit, and (ix) an
- 5 operator.

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1 83. A method for a controller to facilitate a transaction, comprising:
2 receiving a binding seller offer associated with an item being offered for sale by a
3 seller;
4 receiving a binding buyer offer associated with a buyer offering to make a
5 purchase;
6 matching the binding seller offer with the binding buyer offer; and
7 arranging for the seller to sell the item to the buyer.

1 84. The method of claim 83, further comprising:
2 receiving, prior to said matching, seller payment information associated with the
3 seller; and
4 receiving, prior to said matching, buyer payment information associated with the
5 buyer,
6 wherein said arranging is performed using at least one of: (i) the seller payment
7 information, and (ii) the buyer payment information.

1 85. The method of claim 83, further comprising:
2 applying a penalty to the seller if the seller does not provide the item to the buyer.

1 86. The method of claim 85, wherein the penalty comprises at least one of: (i)
2 payment of a penalty amount, (ii) preventing another offer from the seller, and (iii)
3 adjusting a reputation associated with the seller.

1 87. The method of claim 83, further comprising:
2 applying a penalty to the buyer if the buyer does not purchase the item from the
3 seller.

1 88. The method of claim 87, wherein the penalty comprises at least one of: (i)
2 payment of a penalty amount, (ii) preventing another offer from the buyer, and (iii)
3 adjusting a reputation associated with the buyer.

1 89. The method of claim 83, wherein the item is a secondary market item.

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2 90. An apparatus, comprising:

3 a processor; and

4 a storage device coupled to said processor and storing instructions adapted to be
5 executed by said processor to:

6 receive seller offer information associated with an item being offered for
7 sale by a seller;

8 receive buyer offer information associated with a buyer offering to make a
9 purchase;

10 determine an evaluation rule;

11 match the seller offer information and the buyer offer information based on
12 the evaluation rule; and

13 arrange for the seller to sell the item to the buyer.

1 91. The apparatus of claim 90, further comprising:

2 a communication port coupled to said processor and adapted to communicate with
3 at least one of: (i) a seller device, (ii) a buyer device, and (iii) a subsidy provider device.

1 92. The apparatus of claim 90, wherein said storage device further stores at least
2 one of: (i) a buyer database, (ii) a seller database, (iii) an offer to buy database, (iv) an
3 offer to sell database, (v) an item category database, (vi) a quality class database, (vii) a
4 matching objectives database, (viii) a rule database, (ix) a subsidy rules database, (x) a
5 subsidy database, and (xi) a transaction database.

1 93. A medium storing instructions adapted to be executed by a processor to
2 perform a method for facilitating a transaction, said method comprising:

3 receiving seller offer information associated with an item being offered for sale by
4 a seller;

5 receiving buyer offer information associated with a buyer offering to make a
6 purchase;

7 determining an evaluation rule;
8 matching the seller offer information and the buyer offer information based on the
9 evaluation rule; and
10 arranging for the seller to sell the item to the buyer.

1 94. A method of facilitating a transaction via a communication network,
2 comprising:
3 receiving binding seller offer information associated with a secondary market item
4 being offered for sale by a seller, the binding seller offer information including an item
5 description and a minimum price;
6 determining a seller offer code based on the seller offer information;
7 receiving binding buyer offer information associated with a buyer offering to make
8 a purchase, the binding buyer offer information including an item category and a
9 maximum price;
10 determining a buyer offer code based on the buyer offer information;
11 matching the seller offer code and the buyer offer code;
12 determining if the maximum price is at least equal to the minimum price; and
13 if the maximum price is at least equal to the minimum price, arranging for the
14 seller to sell the secondary market item to the buyer.

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